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DE RUEHTC #3381/01 3560741
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 220741Z DEC 05
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4423
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0222

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 003381

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/22/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [KISL](#) [NL](#)
SUBJECT: READOUT OF DAS BRYZA'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DUTCH
ON MUSLIM INTEGRATION AND RADICALIZATION

REF: A. THE HAGUE 2599

[1](#)B. THE HAGUE 2651

[1](#)C. THE HAGUE 3008

[1](#)D. THE HAGUE 3064

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Chat Blakeman,
reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew J. Bryza's recent visit to The Hague featured lively discussion on integration and counter-radicalization issues currently the focus of intense debate in the Netherlands. Counterparts from Dutch Ministries and Dutch Parliament described the antecedents to the pervasive ethnic tension in the Netherlands and defined challenges facing integration of the Muslim community into traditional Dutch society. Dutch interlocutors shared DAS Bryza's conviction that the Netherlands must take a leading role in both integrating Dutch Muslim community members into mainstream Dutch society, while satisfying second- and third-generation immigrants' thirst for connection with their families' Islamic cultures. Though some interlocutors conveyed skepticism that the Muslim community could integrate into the European model of society, all counterparts conveyed deep interest in continued dialogue with the United States in order to fight radicalization. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Bryza discussed integration and radicalization of Muslim communities in the Netherlands with Dutch counterparts on December 13. A roundtable dialogue with interlocutors from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, and Justice and separate meetings with Dutch Parliamentarians yielded insight into the broad ongoing debate in the Netherlands surrounding efforts in Dutch public and private sectors to counter extremism and foster integration of Dutch Muslim communities.

THE DUTCH BEGIN TO EXAMINE WHAT'S UNDER THE CARPET

[1](#)3. (C) Recent events have given impetus to Dutch interest in integration and radicalization issues. Peter Knoppe (Dutch National Counter-Terrorism Board) said that public discussion on the topics became increasingly polemical after the 2002 assassination of Pim Fortuyn, a Dutch politician known for his anti-immigration position, and quite harsh after the murder last December of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim extremist. Saskia Tempelman (Policy Officer, Integration Department, Ministry of Justice) explained that, as the Dutch scrutinize the cultural progenitors of the current imbroglio, they begin to realize that the problem is exacerbated by ignorance -- a majority of native Dutch think all immigrants to the Netherlands are Muslim when in fact only 54% are -- and denial. According to Tempelman, a lot of things (about ethnic tension in the Netherlands) have been swept under the carpet. Knoppe pointed to a lack of opportunities for second- and third-generation Dutch Muslims

and the increase in access to extremist Muslim messages via the internet as the primary origins of ethnic tension confronting contemporary Dutch society.

14. (C) Dutch counterparts expressed grave concerns that Dutch Muslim communities are radicalizing at a faster rate than in Turkey or Morocco. Knoppe said the Government of Morocco has expressed concern to the GONL that Dutch Moroccan communities are an extremist threat in Morocco. As discrimination against Muslims in the Netherlands intensifies, the backlash in the Muslim community correspondingly increases; Coskun Coruz (Parliamentarian, Christian Democrats) lamented that even secular communities of Dutch Muslims are now showing signs of susceptibility to the lure of radicalization. Fadime Orgu (Parliamentarian, Social Conservatives) pointed to what she saw as the hypocrisy of the GONL in promulgating separation of church and state on the one hand and subsidizing religious television and radio programming on the other, and argued that such religious programming exacerbated tensions between the native Dutch and Dutch Muslim communities.

THE WAY FORWARD: INTEGRATING DUTCH MUSLIM LEADERSHIP

15. (C) Though heightened focus has fostered greater Dutch understanding of the integration and radicalization challenges they face, Dutch policy to address the problems is nascent. Tempelman acknowledged that the murder of van Gogh sped up the process leading to the incipience of Dutch domestic integration and radicalization policies. Olthof explained that the Dutch have not yet coordinated counter-radicalization and recruitment strategies with the governments of Morocco or Egypt.
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16. (C) Dutch interlocutors shared DAS Bryza's assessment that the Netherlands faces a dual challenge of integrating the Dutch Muslim community into mainstream society, while satisfying second- and third-generation immigrants' thirst for connection with their families' Islamic cultures. Maintaining this balance is critical to countering both the indignation of discrimination and the spiritual alienation that allow radical messages espoused by internet imams to take root in Dutch Muslim youth. Counterparts agreed that an education program for Dutch Imams is essential to this strategy. Coruz indicated that the CMO, the umbrella organization which claims to represent 80% of Dutch Muslims, recently signed a gentlemen's agreement with the GONL to institutionalize a pedagogic process for Muslim theology students in the Netherlands that would feature an introductory period of a few years of general religious training followed by a few more years of focused training in Islam, under the tutelage of moderate Muslim instructors. Dutch Muslims of Turkish descent, however, refused to sign the agreement. Coruz explained that the Turkish Government's Directorate of Religious Affairs (or Diyanet), which administers mosques and regulates the practice of Islam in Turkey, seeks to (and succeeds in) exerting political influence over the Turkish-Dutch community, encouraging Turkish-Dutch Muslims to retain cultural connections with Turkey. Coruz and Orgu underscored the importance to integration efforts of convincing the Turkish-Dutch community that Dutch concepts of freedom of religion do not impinge on the contemporary Turkish secularist ideology and urged the U.S. to assist Dutch integration efforts by encouraging the Diyanet to soften its efforts to exert political influence over Turkish-Dutch Muslims. DAS Bryza suggested that adapting the Turkish Diyanet's model of moderate Islam could be helpful to efforts to train moderate Dutch Imams. Though Orgu thought the idea had merit, Tempelman indicated that the proposal faces a number of obstacles. Tempelman said the Diyanet currently proscribes training of its Imams outside Turkey and underscored that the Dutch do not want foreign governments exercising control over Dutch minorities.

IS THERE A PLACE FOR MUSLIMS AT THE DUTCH TABLE?

¶17. (C) Some Dutch counterparts intimated that endeavors to integrate Muslims into traditional Dutch society may be futile: Henk Jan Ormel (Parliamentarian, Christian Democrats) -- the only native Dutch Parliamentarian with whom DAS Bryza spoke -- confided that he believed the prospect of Turkish EU membership was the foremost reason that the Dutch voted on October 3 against adopting the EU Constitution. Ormel asserted that the roots of Europe are in Christianity, not Islam, adding, European history has in fact been defined against Islam. Though Marnix Krop (Director General for European Cooperation, MFA) indicated that since the October 3 referendum a majority of Dutch have begun to favor Turkish membership in the EU, Ormel doubted that there had been any genuine change in the Dutch electorate's minds other than a cooling of tempers on the subject.

¶18. (C) DAS Bryza reacted warmly to Dutch solicitations for U.S. cooperation. He promised to share a paper he is currently writing after revising it pursuant to his consultations with Dutch interlocutors.

¶19. (U) DAS Bryza has cleared this cable.

BLAKEMAN